

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 07865 091326Z

54

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 SS-15 NSC-05 DHA-02 A-01 L-03

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R 091145Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5803

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, CASC(PROUTY, GORDON K.)

SUBJECT: ARREST AND RELEASE OF USAID OFFICIAL

REF: STATE 168018 LAGOS 7686 LAGOS 7684

1. REF LAGOS TELEGRAMS REPORTED ARREST AND RELEASE OF REGIONAL FOOD FOR PEACE OFFICER GORDON PROUTY. BACKGROUND OF INCIDENT IS THAT PROUTY ON THURSDAY, JULY 1, ATTEMPTING TO EXTRICATE HIMSELF FROM TRAFFIC JAM, TURNED INTO IKOYI ROAD ENTRANCE TO DODAN BARRACKS. BEFORE HE COULD COMPLETE MANEUVER OF BACKING OUT AND REVERSING DIRECTION TO ESCAPE CONGESTION, CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN MERCEDES CARRYING HIGH RANKING OFFICERS TAIL-GATING HIM FORCED HIM THROUGH THE BARRACKS GATE. TWENTY YARDS INSIDE PROUTY MANAGED TO LET THE MERCEDES PASS. HE RETURNED TO EXIT, BUT GUARD CLOSED GATE AND HELD HIM FOR POLICE INSPECTOR. HE WAS QUESTIONED BRIEFLY ON REASON FOR BEING IN RESTRICTED AREA AND CAR LICENSE AND REGISTRATION WERE EXAMINED. INSPECTOR NOTICED THAT CAR STILL CARRIED NIGER REGISTRATION AND PLATES. PROUTY WAS CAUTIONED TO CORRECT REGISTRATION AND ALLOWED TO LEAVE.

2. SATURDAY, JULY 3, PLAINCLOTHES POLICE OFFICER APPEARED AT PROUTY'S HOUSE AND TOOK HIM TO STATION FOR QUESTIONING. NO REASON WAS GIVEN AND PROUTY WAS NOT GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO CALL OR SEND MESSAGE TO EMBASSY.

POLICE ESCORTED HIM BACK TO HOUSE AT

11:00P.M. AND SEARCHED PREMISES. PROUTY THEN TAKEN TO CELL

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PAGE 02 LAGOS 07865 091326Z

AT POLICE C.D.D. HEADQUARTERS, ALAGBON CLOSE, WHERE HE REMAINED

UNTIL JULY 5, WHEN TAKEN TO TRAFFIC POLICE HEADQUARTERS, IJORA. COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AT IJORN STATION PERMITTED HIM TO TELEPHONE EMBASSY, SERVED HIM WITH SUMMONS TO APPEAR IN MAGISTRATE'S COURT ON JULY 7 TO ANSWER CHARGE OF IMPROPERLY LICENSED VEHICLE, AND RELEASED HIM UPON ARRIVAL OF EMBASSY OFFICER.

3. EMBASSY FIRST NOTIFIED OF ARREST SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 4, WHEN PROUTY'S SERVANT INFORMED STEWARD OF NEARBY USAID FAMILY. EMBASSY ATTEMPTED BUT UNABLE CONTACT MEA OFFICIALS DURING DAY. ORAL PROTEST AND DEMAND FOR PROUTY'S RELEASE DELIVERED OPENING OF BUSINESS JULY 5. DIRECTORS OF AMERICA AND CONSULAR AND LEGAL AFFAIRS DIVISIONS TELEPHONED POLICE LIAISON OFFICIALS AND KEPT EMBASSY INFORMED OF PROGRESS. MEA NOTIFIED EMBASSY ABOUT 2:30 P.M. THAT PROUTY WOULD BE RELEASED TO EMBASSY OFFICER AT IJORA POLICE STATION. AT 3:00P.M. PROUTY HIMSELF TELEPHONED AND INFORMED EMBASSY THAT RELEASE IMMIMENT. CONSULAR OFFICER APPEARED AND PROUTY WAS RELEASED AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

4. EMBASSY ADVISED MEA ORALLY JULY 6 THAT PROUTY WOULD NOT APPEAR IN MAGISTRATE'S COURT. NOTE OF PROTEST DELIVERED JULY 7 (TEXT FOLLOWS SEPTEL).

5. PROUTY'S PASSPORT RETURNED JULY 8 AFTER SEVERAL VISITS TO POLICE ACCOMPANIED BY ECONOMIC OFFICER. SOME DOCUMENTS STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR, INCLUDING CAR REGISTRATION WHICH IN TRAFFIC POLICE HANDS. PLAINCLOTHESMAN WHO INTERROGATED PROUTY VISITED HIS HOUSE EVENING OF JULY 5 AND 6 TO INVITE HIM TO GO TO STATION TO RETRIEVE DOCUMENTS, BUT PROUTY DECLINED TO GO. EXCEPT FOR TIDYING UP A FEW LOOSE ENDS WE THINK THIS PARTICULAR INCIDENT IS CONCLUDED.
CROSBY

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